

REMARKS

The rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 is deemed moot in light of the cancellation of that claim and the submission of clearly statutory method-of-use claims.

The rejection of Claims 1-10 as being anticipated by Meech, Wheeler, Muller or Albert under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is traversed, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Office Action states that all of the applied prior art is capable of use as breather sheets. Applicant respectfully questions the factual basis for such an assertion and requests clarification in that regard. Aside from the substantial differences between the claimed structure in this application and in the prior art structures, no reasonable basis exists to conclude what the Office Action has concluded concerning the prior art's capability.

As will be readily apparent to one skilled in this art, breather sheets must be constructed to maintain a path throughout the vacuum bag to enable air and volatiles to escape. They must be capable of absorbing excess resin. In addition, as Applicant recognized, some way has to be provided, among other things, to prevent the pores of the breather sheet from becoming blocked or from wrinkling during compression in order to provide a high-quality surface finish. None of

these things would have been of the slightest concern in the Meech carpet lining, the Mueller filtering material, the Albert papermaker's fabric, and/or the Wheeler flexible skirts for an air cushion vehicle. That is, there is nothing in the record from which to conclude -- claim language aside -- that any of the materials chosen in these prior art structures would have been selected for allowing use as breather sheet. Consequently, such an assertion must be disregarded.

But Applicant strongly emphasizes that the claims themselves in this application, when construed reasonably, clearly define over each of the cited references. In particular, the claimed intermediate layer is a mesh layer, and the sheet comprises two distinct, affixed outer layers. Webster's defines a mesh as "the opening or space enclosed by the threads of a net between knot and knot, or the threads enclosing such a space; network; a net." The Meech patent describes a carpet lining in which the intermediate layer consists of a number of felt paper strips that are cemented to the outer sheets with perforations being made through both the outer layers and the strips of the assembled structure at the same time. Those strips cannot reasonably be construed as a mesh layer, something crucial if the device is to be used as a breather sheet in a curing operation.

The Mueller patent describes a filtering material in which an intermediate layer of fiber material such as cotton, wool or wadding is used. This material does

not constitute a mesh. Likewise, the Albert patent describes a laminated fabric made up of a number of impervious nonwoven sheets with holes of varying sizes. When the Albert laminate is formed, the holes are superimposed so as to form drainage apertures passing through the laminate. Once again, there is no mesh layer.

The Wheeler patent relates to flexible skirts for air cushion vehicles in which the skirt material is formed by placing a reinforcing fabric between two aperture sheets of flexible material. The reinforcing fabric cannot be reasonably construed as a mesh, but instead a fabric such as a mock leno weave fabric. The skirt layer material comprised of the flowed neoprene forms a homogeneous sheet of reinforced flexible impermeable material (col. 6, lines 42 to 43). In addition to not having a mesh layer, the Wheeler skirt does not have two distinct outer layers with the mesh layer interposed therebetween.

The claimed arrangement herein is not an arbitrary one for the reasons pointed out in the Applicant's disclosure. A mesh layer is used because such a layer provides simultaneously incompressibility across its plane and easy positioning during the assembly process. The distinct outer layers allow different materials with different characteristics to be chosen for any particular application.

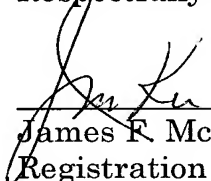
Accordingly, early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #038665.55712US).

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Respectfully submitted,



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